

Board of Education

Minutes

The Board of Education

A Called School Board Meeting of the Board of Education of Fort Smith Public Schools was held Monday, February 8, 2021, beginning at 5:30 PM in the Service Center, Bldg B., 3205 Jenny Lind, P.O. Box 1948, Fort Smith, AR 72901 and virtually per CDC guidelines.

Mr. Bill Hanesworth, president, called the meeting to order. Other board members present were Ms. Susan McFerran, Ms. Talicia Richardson, Mr. Dalton Person, Ms. Yvonne Keaton-Martin. Ms. Dee Blackwell and Mr. Wade Gilkey. Dr. Terry Morawski, Superintendent, Mr. Martin Mahan, Deputy Superintendent, Ms. Sherri Penix, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Campus Support, Mr. Charles Warren, Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Darian Layes, Executive Director of Student Services, Mr. Vance Gregory, Executive Director of Technology, Ms. Zena Featherston Marshall, Executive Director of Communication and Community Partnerships, and Ms. Nadine Brooks, Secretary to the Superintendent were also present.

CONSIDER ADOPTING BOARD PERSONNEL POLICY CHANGES SECTIONS 3 AND 8 FOR SECOND READING

Dr. Morawski presented the Personnel Policy Changes to Sections 3 and 8 to the Board for second and final reading. Ms. Penix reported that some of these policies would become effective immediately after second reading. The others would be effective as of July 1, 2021. The administration recommended that the Board adopt the second reading of the revisions to the Personnel Licensed and Classified Policies. Mr. Person made a motion, seconded by Ms. Richardson, to adopt the second reading of the revisions to the Board Personnel Licensed and Classified Policies to be effective upon the dates stated by the administration. The vote passed 7/0.

CONSIDER ADOPTING BOARD STUDENT POLICY CHANGES SECTION 4 FOR SECOND READING

Dr. Morawski presented the student policy changes to Section 4 for second and final reading. Mr. Layes was available via Zoom for questions. There were no further questions from board members.

Ms. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilkey, to adopt on second reading Section 4 Board Student Policies as presented to be effective on second and final board approval. The vote passed 7/0.

CONSIDER APPROVING RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE ADVANCE REFUNDING OF SERIES 2018A BONDS

Mr. Warren reported that Mr. Kevin Faught, Senior VP with Stephens, had identified an advance refunding opportunity for Fort Smith Public Schools for this 2018A bond issue. He indicated the District could save an estimated almost \$8,000,000 in debt service costs over the lifetime of the bond. Over \$3,300,000 of savings would be recognized in FY2022, \$3,000,000 in FY2023 and \$1,300,000 in FY2024. These are estimates based upon current market conditions. The savings would not be required to be transferred to the Capital Projects Fund, but could be.

Mr. Faught provided a preliminary schedule of events to advance refund the outstanding 2018 bond issue. He has also provided a copy of the resolution, certification and agreements to be approved and signed by the Board to move forward on this bond advanced refund. Mr. Warren stated that this could be brought back to the Board on March 15 if market conditions are favorable.

The administration recommended the board consider approval of the refinancing of the Series 2018A Bonds. Ms. Richardson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gilkey, to authorize Stephens, Inc. to advance refund the outstanding Series 2018A Bonds, approving the resolution and required documentation as presented. The vote passed 7/0.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF UPDATED COVID LEAVE RESOLUTION

Dr. Morawski reported that on December 14, 2020, the Board voted to give District employees up to ten (10) new "District COVID-19 Leave" days, at the District's expense, to take before regular sick leave was taken in the event a District employee was unable to telework and met other conditions. He reported that the Administration desired to provide an additional ten (10) days and open the "District COVID-19 Leave" to employees keeping dependent children that were restricted from attending school or daycare. The total days of "District COVID-19 Leave" would now be twenty (20) days. This leave would be retro-active to January 4, 2021.

Mr. Warren noted that the amended resolution was not a change in policy, but a new procedure to be administered by the District Payroll Office. The resolution updates restrictions and details of this procedure that started in January.

The administration recommended the board consider approving the updated resolution and granting up to a total of twenty days of "District COVID-19 Leave" to District employees.

Board members commended the District administration for being the District to set this standard.

Ms. Blackwell made a motion, seconded by Ms. Keaton-Martin, to approve the "District COVID-19 Leave" updated resolution. The vote passed 7/0.

PRESENTATION- CALENDAR & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Penix, with input from the Licensed and Classified Committees, presented a proposal for a change from a 193 day calendar to a 190 day calendar. This proposal also included a change in the requirement for professional development from 54 hours to 48 hours for teachers. The professional development proposal is also a change in policy 3.6 Licensed Personnel Employee Training. The Personnel Policy Committee selects waiver/flex day. The pay remains the same for teachers. Student days do not change. Ms. Penix reviewed changes to both proposed calendars.

This proposal is a presentation only. A recommendation for the calendar change to amend the 2021-2022 calendar and present the 2022-2023 calendar will be action items for the next scheduled board meeting. The policy change will be brought to the Board for approval also.

PRESENTATION - #ONTRACK UPDATE

Mr. Mahan, Dr. Mary Ann Johns, and Dr. Ginni McDonald, presented an update on the district's #OnTrack initiative. Dr. McDonald and Dr. Johns shared data on credit recovery for students.

Several videos of high school and elementary principals spoke about initiatives and enrichment programs they were using to help students stay engaged at their campuses.

Northside High School Principal Keri Rathbun

Chaffin Principal Todd Marshall

Darby Principapl Katie Kreimer Hall

Howard Principal Velmar

Morrison Principal Brittney Watson

Cavanaugh Principal Hank Needham

Sunnymede Principal Krystle Smith

Cook Elementary Principal Marna Boltuc

Southside High School Principal Lisa Miller

Mr. Mahan stated that the biggest challenge is keeping virtual students that are failing engaged.

This is a presentation item. No action is required.

Board members commended District teachers, principals and administrators for their efforts in keeping students #OnTrack.

BOARD MEMBERS FORUM

There were no comments

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Bill Hanesworth, President

Dee Blackwell, Secretary